Leasing out of heritage sites

4366. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's expertise in preservation/restoration of heritage sites/ monuments is being sought by Vietnam and Cambodia for restoration of their heritage sites like Angkor Vat Temple, etc.;

(b) if so, whether this expertise could be put to use in the restoration of our heritage sites/monuments; and

(c) the reasons for Government having chosen to lease out heritage site like Taj, Agra and Hampi in Karnataka to private parties like Tatas and Indian Oil despite holding of such expertise and know-how, which is sought after by other countries?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has not leased out any monument to any party in the private sector. The ASI, under the National Culture Fund, has signed MoUs with the Indian Hotel Corporation Limited and the Indian Oil Foundation for funding the conservation and developmental activities around some selected monuments. All conservation works shall be done by the ASI directly.

Funds for tourist inflow in A.P.

4367. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have provided Central funds/grants for construction of budget accommodation to attract tourist inflow in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of budget accommodations constructed in the State in public and private sector with Central funds so far; and

(d) whether Government propose to increase funds/grants to the State for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In Andhra Pradesh 11 tourist complexes (Yatriniwases) have been sanctioned during Ninth Plan for Rs. 411.00 lakhs. Under the scheme for grant of interest subsidy on loans to 1-3 Star Hotels, seven hotel projects in the private sector in Andhra Pradesh have been extended interest subsidy benefits.

(d) Funds are provided to the State/UT Governments for tourism-related projects including budget accommodation every year on the basis of projects identified in consultation with them.

Rejection of World Heritage Sites for incomplete information

4368. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether 13 Indian proposals for grant of World Heritage Sites were rejected for incomplete information; and

(b) if so, the action taken to re-submit the proposals with appeal to treat them as fresh requests at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Eleven nominations for cultural sites of India were submitted to the UNESCO in 1998 for inscribing on the World Heritage List. The UNESCO required some additional information on these proposals and also offered to depute an expert to redraft some of the nominations.

Meanwhile, under the revised rules of UNESCO, countries which already have World Heritage Sites enlisted are henceforth restricted from submitting more than one nomination per year.

(b) Accordingly, Government of India have submitted a nomination for inscribing the Pre-historic Painted Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka in District Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, for World Heritage status. The proposal is under consideration.

Special scheme for encouraging tourism

†4369. PROF. R. B. S. VARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have formulated a special scheme to encourage tourism;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.